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DRAFT - 71-0580

26 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : Youth Forum - "The Agency and American Youth" Panel

1. We do not have a verbatim record of this portion of the two-day Youth Forum. We have consulted with the Directors of Training, Security and Medical Services and the Panel chairman [ ] and Panel member [ ]. We have also talked with other members of our staff and with Mr. [ ] who were present.

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2. We have developed a range of view on the substance and the significance of this Panel session. Our opinions include the following points:

a. The subject the Panel was intended to cover was not well-enough defined within the Conference or by the Panel and was not understood (accepted?) by the audience.

b. The Panel's spokesman did not gain audience acceptance of the Panel's desire to talk about "youth" in the age bracket (early 20's) which had been established by Dr. [ ] and other earlier speakers.

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c. The Panel's presentation was too pat and self-serving to the Agency -- probably too defensive.

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d. The Panel was surprised by the type of questions and assertions and elected to adjust to deal with those actually posed as if they were proper to this session rather than indicating clearly which were outside the proper scope of the Panel's segment of the integrated two-day forum program. For example, the Panel accepted and dealt with the first question which was a blast on fitness reports as if it were proper to this Panel's subject.

e. The Panel members conducted themselves maturely and sensibly despite some sharp needling by members of the audience, including some of the students.

f. The challenging statements and questions were seemingly posed by DD/I personnel, including some known to disagree in substantive terms with policies of their Directorate, the Agency and the Administration.

g. The challengers in the audience went to this session not necessarily to deal with the announced subject but to give vent to whatever "anti" feelings they harbored. We have not been successful in determining what the real problems were that the audience was raising. They asked about fitness reporting, talked about Eastern university students' attitudes toward the Agency, the loss of the best

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young people and image. There were apparently inferences or assertions of problems without specifications.

h. The Panel did not handle the question of recruitment at the Eastern schools to the satisfaction of its audience. Though they described our focus on the graduate students and pointed out that we saw undergraduates off campus, the point was not made or recognized that attitudes toward Government service and national policy are changing on these campuses and that the problem, therefore, is not unique to CIA. Perhaps most important was the failure to emphasize that we are not in fact trying to recruit among the undergraduates.

i. We checked but could find no evidence that any member of the MAG was in the auditorium during this Panel meeting. Apparently also there was considerable lack of knowledge of MAG. Perhaps we should be publicizing it and perhaps we should also consider making it an action unit if it is decided to pursue the worries listed by audience members at another Panel session.

3. We have additional discussing to do within the Directorate. Some senior officers believe that we should create additional opportunities for the venting of feelings, partially on the theory that it is not necessarily what is said but the important thing is that we allow things to be said. It has been

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suggested, for example, that we might have CT classes of past years hold "reunions" at which senior Agency management officials might appear. Other senior Support personnel believe that we should not hold additional sessions at which the relatively few challengers might be able to again hold forth. In this connection it has been noted that, if we had problems of any magnitude with our young people, the auditorium should have been jammed for all sessions, but especially for this Panel period. It has been suggested that we might arrange for the few most outspoken audience members to meet separately with the three Panel members to try and talk out what each was attempting to establish during the larger session on 11 February 1971. It is also suggested that the Panel meet again separately with just the students in the course.

4. On balance we do not believe that this session was a disaster and we are inclined to believe that the fact that it was held is a plus rather than a minus, but we are not now prepared to suggest additional such meetings be constituted.

John W. Coffey  
Deputy Director  
for Support

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